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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2008

In Today's Papers

A New Step in Turkish-Armenian Relations
Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Vatan, Yeni Safak, Hurriyet and others: Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandian came to Istanbul yesterday to attend the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) meeting; after the meeting Nalbandian held a press conference and called for the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations and the opening of the border crossing between Turkey and Armenia. Mainstream Sabah reports that the Turkish and Armenian Foreign Ministers held a joint press conference following a two-and-a half hour meeting. FM Babacan said "We evaluated our bilateral relations, The Caucasus Cooperation and Stability Platform and other regional issues at the meeting. We concluded our meeting in a very positive atmosphere. Our communication will continue in the political and technical fields. Our aim is full normalization in ties." FM Nalbandian, in return, said, "We opened a new page without any pre-conditions." Sabah adds that Nalbandian repeated his call for the immediate opening of the Turkey-Armenia border crossing and Babacan asked for the Baku-Yerevan dialogue to be speed up. Nalbandian also stressed that Armenian President Sargsyan will come to Turkey in October 2009 to watch the football game between the two countries' national teams. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that Nalbandian said that Yerevan was optimistic about Turkey's proposal to set up a joint committee of historians regarding the 1915 incidents.

Editorial Commentary on Relations between Turkey and Armenia

Can Dundar wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Approximately 11 years ago, the Turkish and Armenian Foreign Ministers would not even talk to each other over the phone. Therefore, yesterday's meeting between the two FMs attracted attention. In 1991 there were indirect contacts between the two countries, but even those contacts were made rather secretly. During those days, delegations from Yerevan had to wear dark sunglasses in order not to be recognized while they were in Turkey. During Nalbandyan's visit yesterday, no one needed to hide behind sunglasses. Officials from both countries are optimistic regarding efforts toward an improved bilateral relationship. This is a small step for the world, but a big one for

the region. One should not ignore Washington's role in this dialogue. The only way to prevent Obama's recognition of the Armenian Genocide claims is to improve dialogue between Ankara and Yerevan."

Mustafa Balbay wrote in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "While Turkey's main target is EU accession, it must not be forgotten that Turkey's strong influence in Asia and the Black Sea region will have a direct impact on Brussels. All regional alliances around the world are built on economic foundations. The European Economic Community is headed toward becoming The United States of Europe. Turkey, while trying to overcome a series of problems in the beginning of the 21st century, is missing lots of opportunities. Armenian FM Nalbandyan, who visited Turkey to participate in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation summit talks, drew an optimistic picture regarding ties between Turkey and Armenia. Without third countries interfering, Turkey can resolve all problems with its neighbors, including Armenia."

Turkey to Host a New Summit for Afghan and Pakistani Leaders
Mainstream Sabah and Islamist-oriented Zaman report that the government is preparing to host Afghan and Pakistani leaders for a summit in Istanbul on December 6. Zaman quotes Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta as saying, "President Gul will meet with Afghan President Karzai and Pakistani President Zardari on December 6 in Istanbul. Sabah reports that Turkish mediation between Afghanistan and Pakistan will mark an important step in mending ties between the two nations.

Citibank Rescue Brings Relief

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Media outlets cover the bailout of Citigroup in a positive manner, while noting the need for bailout after bailout for American corporations. Columnist Hadi Uluengin of mainstream Hurriyet writes "Is Marx Going to Make a Comeback?" Mainstream Sabah reports, "The Rescues Aren't Stopping," as "Citigroup is the latest member to join the caravan." Meanwhile, the paper also reports, "The World Rejoices as Citigroup is Saved." On the same page, Sabah carries photos of protests by socialist groups in India against rising prices, while another headline on the same page says "Country for Sale: Iceland," as "The country is on the brink of bankruptcy" and last week the Parliament "voted to seek IMF assistance in order to reduce the prices of tomatoes, eggs and toilet paper." Mainstream Milliyet carries the front page banner headline, "The Largest Bailout" as, "The \$306 billion Citigroup bailout is the most government support a company has ever received in history." Milliyet also reports, "The Rescue Packages Give Hope and the Markets Quickly Rose." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "The World Sighs a Breath of Relief as Citigroup is Saved."

Hillary Clinton: Neither Hawk, Nor Dove
Islamist-oriented Zaman says in a news-commentary if Hillary Clinton accepts the post of Secretary of State, she would lose her chances of running against Barack Obama in the next race for president of the U.S. Obama, by picking Clinton as Secretary of State, will play "good cop-bad cop" in international arena -- Clinton will pursue a tough tone which will be moderated in the White House. Obama and Clinton were known for their support for the Armenian question. Turkey expects the U.S. will display the necessary sensitivity while approaching the Armenian problem, so that Washington will not harm the fresh opening between Ankara and Yerevan, comments Zaman.

Survey on Life Patterns of Women in Slums
Liberal Radikal carries a survey conducted by Konda research company on lifestyles and attitudes of people living in slums in major Turkish cities. "The Slums: The Destitute and Deprived of Metropolitan Cities" survey shows people living in slums continue their lifestyle habits even after once they move to new neighborhoods in shantytowns. The survey indicates 49 percent of women in slums have never worn make up, 71 percent never wore bathing suit, and 60 percent never put on sleeveless shirts. Social and cultural activities are rare, as shown by 37 percent who have never went out dining with friends, 52 percent have never been to plays or movies, and 51 percent have never celebrated new years. According to the survey, 20 percent of men pay constant visits to

'coffeehouses.' Forty-four percent never went on vacation, and those who go on vacation usually go to their hometowns. Of the people living in slums, 65 percent watch more than three hours of television every day, mostly soap operas. Those who live in slums are concerned over the lack of education for their children, behind that concerns lies the concern over the lack of social security guarantees and growing poverty. The survey says "slum people" share the same fears with other segments of people in the society, only on a much more intense level. The survey's conclusion emphasizes that living in metropolitan cities does not necessarily lead to modernization.

Editorial Commentary on Turkish Economy

Erdal Saglam wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The AKP government continues to make mistakes regarding guarantees for deposit accounts. The government could have followed the lead of European countries two months ago in establishing a full guarantee to all deposit accounts. Instead of being angry with the banks for increasing their interest rates, PM Erdogan should evaluate his own decisions. By not giving full guarantees to deposit accounts at the right time, he forced the banks to increase rates. The quality of a country's economic administration reveals itself during hard times..."

Editorial Commentary on State's Role re Religion

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Ihsan Dagi in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "Society does not and should not need the state's intervention regarding religious services. Does Islam need the state? Religious faiths and groups prefer to exist through their own dynamics and voluntary contributions. If the obstacles in front of Alevi and Sunni groups, communities and sects are removed, society will produce services necessitated by its religious beliefs. Whether the state supports a company, a religion or a religious group, the state doesn't do so without anything in return. Thus, the state should not interfere in religion, and Muslims should not ask for anything from the state except non-interference."

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said in a statement the Iraqi Council of Ministers decided to open an Iraqi Consulate in Turkey's southeastern city of Gaziantep.
- The pro-Kurdish DTP MP Osman Ozcelik has submitted to parliament a draft for opening a Kurdish language and literature department in Istanbul University.
- The energy ministers of Turkey, India and Israel will meet this month on building an oil pipeline connecting the three countries.

International News

- Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said his government has no objection to Kurdish authorities purchasing weapons and ammunition to arm their security forces, but the Baghdad government wants to be informed of arms purchases.
- "We have agreed on the principle that oil remains for all Iraqi people," Iraqi Oil Minister Hussain al-Sharistani said at a joint news conference with the Kurdish Regional Government PM Nechirvan Barzani.
- Russia said it has evidence that "mercenaries" from the United States, Turkey, Ukraine and Chechnya fought for Georgia in the five-day August 2008 war with Russia.

SILLIMAN